



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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June 23, 1997

SUBJECT: Air Quality Task Force - 2nd Meeting

TO: Dan Glickman, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

This letter provides a summary of the significant outcomes from the second meeting of your Agricultural Air Quality Task Force held in Fresno, California, June 17 through 19, 1997. A complete set of the minutes from the meeting will be available for your use and information in the near future. The Task Force was especially appreciative that Ms. Felicia Marcus, Region IX Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as Ms. Sally Shaver from EPA National Headquarters, was able to participate in the session. Significant actions include:

- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency was developed and unanimously approved by the Task Force for your review and comment. We envision the MOU as establishing the framework for addressing agricultural air quality issues in a coordinated manner between USDA and EPA and for providing a mechanism for the timely transfer of scientific information. It is our hope that this MOU can be finalized for signature in the very near future.
- There are many current agricultural air quality issues requiring additional research. We strongly reiterate our previous recommendation of March 10, 1997 that you consider a Departmental air quality research initiative to provide the level of understanding this issue demands. There must be a serious commitment by USDA to provide science based air quality information. The Task Force has developed three areas of high priority research as it relates to agriculture and air quality. These are: (1) particulate matter, (2) ozone, and (3) odor. A more detailed list of research needs required in these areas will be provided shortly. We most seriously solicit your support to help advance this research agenda and needed funding with appropriate members of Congress.
- The majority of members continue to believe that more time is necessary to conduct additional research that clearly defines the consequences of agriculture on air quality and ultimately human health. There continues to be a strong prevalence of opinion reaffirmed that it is premature for EPA to change existing particulate matter and ozone standards until adequate scientific evidence is obtained.

We were impressed with the voluntary efforts of the California agricultural producers in improving air quality and in their cooperative efforts to gain an understanding of the complex relations between air quality and agriculture.

The opportunity to provide advice and counsel to you is greatly appreciated. We look forward to providing you with recommendations based upon the best scientific information available, so that our future challenges and opportunities can be met in a reasonable and practical manner.

USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force